



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

*of his hand (i. e., creditor) who lendeth to his neighbor, shall make release. He shall not urge his neighbor and his brother, for a release unto Jehovah has been proclaimed.*

It is evident that nothing can be decided from the English word "release" as to the point under consideration. Will the Hebrew word help us? It is the same word as that used in Ex. XXXIII., 11, where it is commanded that the fields *lie fallow* in the seventh year. It also is found in 2 Kgs. IX., 32 in the command to *throw down* the wicked queen from the castle window. But this idea is equally ambiguous. Is the debt to *lie fallow*, to be *thrown down*, only for a time, or for ever? If the former, for how long? If the release were to be made at the beginning of the seventh year it might seem plausible that it was to continue only during that year, but as the statement is expressly made, "*at the end shalt thou make a release*," it would be difficult to place any limit to the temporary release since none is mentioned in the text itself. Would it be for a week or a year? The law as it stands would on this hypothesis be so vague as to be ineffective.

Giving up then the expectation of finding help in the settlement of the problem from any examination of the words, our hope lies in the careful analysis and weighing of more general considerations. The lawgiver in the entire passage seems to have in mind not the ordinary transactions of trade and commerce between those who are able to pay their obligations, but those loans, whether of food or money made by the rich to their poorer brethren. The whole aim of the legislator is thus stated: *to the end that there be no poor among you*. The command to establish the release *at the end* of the Sabbatical year would then afford great relief, as during the enforced season of idleness when the fields were lying fallow the poor Israelite would naturally be quite dependent upon his richer neighbor who by reason of his wealth was enabled to make much more adequate preparations for this vacation-season. Moses accordingly, in the verses that follow, urges the rich not to be unconcerned about the distress of the poor. But should the rich man after lending to his neighbor during the seventh year, at the close of it and the beginning of the new season urge and press his poorer brother for payment, the poor man would be disheartened and weighed down at the outset of the labor with a burden too great for him. Hence the command to cancel all such debts is seen to be a wise and merciful provision of the great lawgiver. He makes the law in the interests of a beneficent and brotherly charity. It is another form of securing the closest fraternal unity. Nor was this command likely to be abused. The rich would be restrained from indiscriminately lending by the very law which demanded from him the freest benevolence. Should this law indeed be considered to apply to all transactions it would as a matter of course destroy all business credit. It would deal a death-blow to commercial progress. Such was not the aim of Moses. The whole spirit of the command limits it to the class of transactions which have been mentioned, loans made to the poor whether in the unavoidable business inactivity of the Sabbatical year or on earlier occasions of distress, want or misfortune. At the close of the seven years' cycle, his crushing burdens are removed and he can once more pluck up courage to labor with the hope of success.

G. S. GOODSPEED.

---

**The Bible.**—Certainly we should have no jealousy of what is called the Higher Criticism. It concerns itself with the authorship of the books of the Bible, the times when they were written, the manner in which they came to have a place in

the Sacred Canon, and such like questions. Lovers of the Bible can lose nothing by such criticism; and they may gain much from it. True it is not always serious or reverent. It is not always fair. The spirit of much of it is anti-supernaturalistic. If men set out with the idea that they are to find neither miracles nor prophecy in the Bible, they will probably account for the miracles recorded in it by ascribing them to the superstition of the times when the books of the Bible were composed; they will view them as simply the popular conception of natural events; and as to the prophecies, as one of the school said to the writer of this paper, they must have been written just after the events took place. But this irreverent, unfair spirit,—this spirit which proceeds on false assumptions, will injure most those who cherish it. Certainly, if there is truth in the Bible, it cannot injure that. If the Bible as itself declares, is “given by inspiration of God,” and if the God who is believed to have inspired holy men of old to write it, “makes the wrath of man to praise him, and will restrain the remainder thereof,” its inspiration will be all the more evident and luminous for this criticism. The Bible has stood many tests in its past history. We may be assured that it will come out of the ordeal to which it is now subjected, not only unscathed, but victorious.

It is useful in times of trial and mental strain to disencumber our minds of wrong conceptions. Like useless lumber these are apt to be in the way. It has been found useful to distinguish between revelation and inspiration. “Revelation is the communicating from God to a mortal, of knowledge which could not be, or had not been, obtained in any other way, by his immediate influence on the human mind.” Inspiration is “the qualifying a recipient of revelation to communicate the revealed knowledge to his fellow creatures with perfect certainty or accuracy.” “That which was not communicated by revelation, but which a person might have previously known by any of the providentially appointed means of acquiring information (such as personal observations, bearing a part in transactions, memory, traditions, conversation, written documents or public notoriety) might be matter appointed by God to be conveyed to others; in which case the due selection of the matter, and the faithful transmission of it to others by speaking or writing, would be the object of inspiration, though without revelation, as well as the former case of inspiration resting upon a revelation.” These definitions are taken from a note in Dr. John Pye Smith’s “Scripture Testimony to the Messiah.” p. 24, vol. I., ed. 4th, 1847. According to them, “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God,” but “all Scripture” is not revelation. It is not claimed that the whole Bible has been directly revealed by God; but that the writers of the Bible had an influence exerted on them by God, by which they were taught what and how they should write and speak. Truth which the human faculties could never have reached, was revealed to them; this truth they were inspired to make known; it is believed to be contained in the volume, which, because of its incomparable excellence, is called the Bible—The Book.

Another distinction is very useful,—that between inspiration as a fact, and theories of inspiration. Very much of the opposition to the religion of the Bible has been directed, not against that religion itself, but against human conceptions of it. We must not suppose that a person impugns the inspiration of the Scriptures, because he assails some theory of inspiration, which lovers of the Bible, in their zeal to defend its truth, have advanced. A person may be a sincere believer in the Atonement though he may refuse assent to some theory as to the nature of the work of the Redeemer of men, which some school of theologians has advocated. A per-

son may devoutly believe in the work of the Holy Spirit on the human soul to produce regeneration, though he may be unwilling to accept all that some school of theologians has set forth on that subject. And so it is possible to accept the Bible as an inspired book, though some theory of inspiration that has long held sway be rejected as inconsistent with the facts of the case. A man must not be branded as an infidel because he does not believe in *verbal* inspiration. Extreme theories, false, because they are extreme,—are mischievous. Not only do they foster a narrow spirit in those who advocate them, they repel the sincere inquirer after truth, and confirm in his position the sceptic, who in his keen-sightedness, sees their inconsistency with facts.

One thing, in regard to the Bible, cannot be disputed. It is in existence. The question is, How are we to account for it? If it has not been given to us by men whom God inspired for the purpose, how has it come into existence? Is it such a book as man either could or would have produced?

It is a book which has greatly influenced men wherever it has been circulated. It has stimulated the human intellect. It has quickened and refined the human sympathies. The highest culture and civilization of the age is the effect of the influence of the Bible on man. This ought to be taken into account in forming a judgment as to its character.

It is a book, to elucidate and explain which many books have been written. This is one of the ways in which it has quickened the human understanding. The literature to which the Bible has given rise is no inconsiderable part of the literature in existence. Nor does there seem to be any diminution of the power of the Bible to produce other books. More books are being written in this age in defence and in illustration of the Bible than in any previous age: and yet the Bible is ahead of them all and maintains its place as the book for the ages. Not only this: but, in every age, books have been written against the Bible, which have no more effect towards destroying it, than the beating of the surf against the rocky coast. Books *versus* the Bible written in past ages are comparatively unknown, while the Bible is as much loved as ever, and marches on in its conquest of the minds of men. This fact also should be weighed in forming an estimate of the book.

The Bible is a book too, which many people are trying to circulate all over the earth. Men have combined to translate this book into all the languages spoken by men (and have succeeded in translating it into a great many of them) and to give it to all peoples. And what is strange, if the book be of man, these translators and circulators of the Bible claim that the motives which constrain them in this work are derived from the book itself. They do it not for selfish ends: to increase their gains, or to acquire power, or to obtain the ascendancy over men politically. This work of Bible diffusion (and we may add of extending the religion of the Bible) is the greatest and purest benevolent movement of the age. The end contemplated is gained when the book is read, its truths understood and believed, its spirit imbibed and its precepts practised. If men, without divine help, have produced a book which has led such multitudes to accept itself as a Book from God, and which has awakened in them such enthusiasm to spread it and disseminate the religion which it inculcates, they have certainly achieved a great wonder.

Such considerations may well beget in us a desire to examine the Bible so that we may ascertain what there is in it different from other books. We may discover that it is a book which bad men could not have written, and which good men would not, unless by the inspiration of the Almighty.—REV. G. ANDERSON.